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CROP JUDGING IN WEN-TENG HSIEN, SHANTUNG

[Summary: The wheat judging program in Wen-teng Hsien, Shantung, to determine the best production records, was carefully organized and resulted in improvement in agricultural techniques among the farmers, and in raising their morale.

This report was prepared by the Shantung Unit of the Central Corps for Judging High Wheat Production.]

Wen-teng Hsien was liberated in 1940, hence political consciousness and rural organization are well advanced. The hsien has a population of 420,000 and a tilled acreage of 970,000 mou [one mou equals 1/6 acre]. In 1951, some 1,021 mutual aid teams and 2,563 individual farmers were enrolled in the patriotic high production emulation plan. Wheat accounts for 33 1/3 percent of the hsien's agricultural production.

A hsien conference of all agricultural leaders was convened [no date given] in which the national plan for judging wheat production and its importance to the hsien were explained. Committees and subcommittees were set up on all levels and the importance of relating the judging program with all current production activities was stressed. Circulating units were organized to promote the plan in local areas.

Some cadres and people were critical of the plan. They felt that all country people knew good grain when they saw it and it was unnecessary to have so much organization and such plans. Many feared it would lead to higher taxation.

The judging program began with the key mutual aid teams, the representatives of other teams being observers. Standing wheat was first judged as to general appearance, side stalks, even ripening, uniform growth, height and sturdiness of stalks, lodging, and insect damage.

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Next, there was judging of skills and attitudes, such as seed selection, sowing methods, use of fertilizer, irrigation practices, insect extermination, and patriotism. The analysis of political motivation is an important factor when considering the eligibility of individuals or groups for high crop production awards. Also in judging mutual aid team production, an analysis of the utility of such organizations in securing high production is required.

After the preliminary judging of individual producers and organizations by consideration of the above factors, the judging of production plots was carried out. Model workers and activists led the people in viewing the fields. High producers explained their methods and later there was public discussion of what had been viewed. Before the harvest a preliminary estimate of production was made on the basis of the people's visual evaluation. A standard for high production was set. Plans were laid and carried out for the selection of the best seeds in the field before harvest.

Most high producers (in Wen-teng, high production means a wheat yield of above 400 catties per mou) selected a small plot in their field which was separately harvested, threshed, cleaned, and measured to represent their high production.

After high producers had been selected on the village, hsiang, and ch'u levels the results were compiled and sent to the hsien authorities. After a 2-day conference, the hsien authorities granted awards for three farmers for seed selection, three for over-all high production on their whole fields, two for special high production on selected plots, and four mutual aid teams, one village, one hsiang, and one ch'u for high production.

Cases of inefficient and slipshod judging with some authoritarianism and restriction of the freedom of the people in judging was displayed by some of the cadres.

Helpful results of the campaign included the following:

1. The peasants learned that to increase production is as patriotic an act as paying the grain tax or donating for planes and guns.
2. The idea that production had reached its limit and that high production requires much land was exploded.
3. Peasants learned the value of leadership and the evils of authoritarianism.
4. Fear that higher production meant higher tax rates was eliminated.
5. The spirit of smug self-satisfaction on the part of model workers was dispelled and interest in organization was promoted by revealing its advantages for high production.
6. The level of agricultural skills was raised.
7. All lines of endeavor including health, security, and cultural improvement were advanced.

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